

CORRESPONDENCE

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PHASES IN A SOCIETY'S EVOLUTION

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—Accepting the view expressed in THE EUGENICS REVIEW of March 1965 (Notes of the Quarter—Phases in a Society's Evolution) that in order to bring about world population control, with favourable differential fertilities, before it is too late, the methods of propaganda and "pressure group" are alike unsuitable and that education, research and leadership are what is needed, there remains the problem of finding the right leader or leaders.

A correspondent in *The Times* of 23rd April 1965, discussing an article by *The Times* Political Correspondent dealing with the Nuffield Report on the 1964 General Election, drew special attention to a passage in that article in which it was stated that we are moving towards the day when "the point of politics will not be the conviction of politicians about the rightness of their principles, policies or beliefs. It will be to discover the degree of prejudice or gullibility in the electors. The point of leadership will not be to lead but to follow the crowd."

If this view is correct, and under our present system of party politics there seems no reason to doubt it, it is clear that our objective can never be reached if we rely only upon the leadership provided by that system. In other words we may be sure that our "leaders", who will increasingly have to follow rather than lead the crowd, that is the electors, will never bother to interest themselves in eugenics until the crowd do so. And the crowd, if they ever begin to think about the matter at all, are more likely to favour a dysgenic dispensation than a eugenic one.

In a further Note—Eugenic Opportunity—you remark: "... all experience demonstrates the slowness of evolution in freedom in comparison with saltation under dictatorship". And indeed to bring about "an increase in contraceptive effort on a scale so grand as scarcely yet to be contemplated let alone realized", in a matter of thirty-five years, will certainly need a more rapid transition than our present Parliamentary—Democratic—Party system is likely to be capable of achieving. What then is the inference? Is it not that we should cease

to look for leadership exclusively amongst politicians, but seek it also elsewhere?

When we look around the World to-day we find dictatorships everywhere; and all of them are either under the control of military officers, or have the latter's firm support. Indeed, it is impossible to conceive a revolution in these times other than one brought about or actively supported by officers in the armed forces. Scientists, supreme amongst "thinking things" (*vide* Descartes and de Chardin) are the only possible leaders of thought in the present "noosphere". But they need an instrument to convert their thoughts into action. And where, if present political trends continue, can such an instrument be found but in the armed forces?

No sensible person is likely to want a change in our Constitution if it can be avoided. And, if politicians see the red light before it is too late, no change need ever be necessary. But if it ever should be unavoidable some form of dictatorship may be the only feasible alternative. And, if other countries are any guide, the dictator is likely to come from the armed forces. Should not an effort be made therefore, before it may be too late, to interest the officers of these forces in the subject of eugenics? How many of them now are members of the *Society*? How many Officers' Messes subscribe to THE EUGENICS REVIEW? Have any lectures by eugenic experts been given to officers serving at home or abroad? I suggest that these matters should receive the *Society's* earnest attention. For if we are ever forced by events to make a change in the Constitution would it not be prudent to ensure, as far as possible, that our new leaders will be well informed.

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ANTI-DYSTHANASIA

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—I am writing to you at the suggestion of Dr. Bayard Carter of the Duke Medical Center at Durham, North Carolina. He has shown considerable interest in the preparation of my thesis on Anti-Dysthanasia and he suggested that your readers may be able to assist me in materials or suggested resources for my research.

This question of anti-dysthanasia (no hard death) is becoming an area of growing concern for the medical and religious groups. Over the past the question of euthanasia has been argued but generally considered morally and ethically wrong. The pros and cons on this subject are not my interest at this point.

However, I am concerned with that point where a physician realizes that he has done everything possible to heal and sustain a patient's health with no success, but where he knows that he can prevent death by using extraordinary means which could result in only "watering the vegetables" by intravenous feeding and medication.

The question therefore arises for the Church and the medical profession, "Should the act of dying be prolonged by artificial means or should the patient be allowed to die normally, with the assistance only for living his last moments in peace and dignity?" I believe that we in the Church and you in medicine and science have an obligation to those who have received every medically known and available treatment with no positive or productive effect for life except to prolong death by maintaining vital body functions by mechanical means.

The Church must re-evaluate her understanding of life and death and her responsibility to help those who face death, either as doctor to patient, relative to patient, or patient to self. We must help them to realize that death in itself is not bad, but it is an event which must come and one that is eternally good. I realize that there is a feeling of loss and separation which is tremendous for many people but in the Christian-Jewish-Arabic, etc., religious, concepts of God's promise of the "after life" is of ultimate importance.

The medical profession has important obligations here, too. It has accepted man as the ultimate being of importance and itself as the responsible instrument for man's physical care, as is seen in the Hippocratic oath. However, patient care has reached such a point with the physician that death is labelled "Failure". I believe that the physician is obligated by his advanced knowledge to realize a responsibility in using that knowledge—not only in diagnosis toward cure and sustenance but also in diagnosis toward discontinuing treatment or not beginning treatment when the only outcome would be to prolong dying. I realize some of the problems involved in such decisions but I am also aware of the great importance of such decision in the

interest of human dignity in death, in lessening the financial and emotional drain on the remaining family, and in the prevention of temptation toward experimentation.

This subject has been met with great interest among the medical and clerical people with whom I have talked. I hope that we may begin some serious consideration on the questions involved, working together to explore all the areas of concern and arriving, if possible, at some conclusions.

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INTERNAL FACTORS IN EVOLUTION

To the Editor, *The Eugenics Review*

Sir,—My attention is drawn to the review by P. M. Sheppard, FRS (1965), Professor of Genetics (Liverpool), of my *Internal Factors in Evolution*.^{*} I break a rule of not replying to criticism, since (1) in my view the review is authoritarian, *i.e.* anti-scientific; (2) the book treats an evolutionary principle which, though it is collective in origin, I feel bound to defend. (To save space I call Professor Sheppard: S).

1. S says "*It would have been better if this book had never been published*" (my italics). I call this pronouncement Ω , the last thing any scientific reviewer should claim the authority to assert. I must therefore state what should be obvious. Ω is damaging to science, for it expresses a readiness to muzzle opinion. It presumes a knowledge no man possesses. Should Ω perchance prove mistaken (since S has told your readers Ω , it is proper to inform them that over twenty distinguished reviewers and correspondents from the UK, the USA, and Belgium, have welcomed the book in the strongest terms) it cannot be expunged. If a book is by a young imagination exploring new avenues, Ω is cruel and injures science.

That is not all. The internal factors appear to lie outside S's main interest (genetics) and in the realms of molecular biology, micro-biology, cytology, and structural embryology. As a geneticist Fellow of the Eugenics Society S's assumption of authority outside his main field alarms me, for where will Whitehall find scientifically cautious and socially mature advisers on the genetic issues of tomorrow (what

^{*} THE EUGENICS REVIEW, 1965, 57, 144.